

*If you use a meditation app such as Insight Timer, I encourage you to have it set for a short time of silence—perhaps 3 or 4 minutes—so you can start it at the KEEP SILENCE cue below. Or you could simply be silent for a few moments without using any app or timer.*

**“Put Out into the Deep Water”:  
A Meditation on Luke 5:1–11**



*Lake Kinneret in early morning  
Photo: The Israel Free Image Collection Project*

In the tradition of our community,  
there is a story  
about Jesus teaching beside a lake.

He is teaching now, in the early morning,  
sitting in a fishing boat close to shore.

You see the sunlight glinting on the water.

You hear the gentle rhythm of waves lapping at the sand.

You press in closer, eager to hear the word of God.

Let the clamor of the world fall away.

Focus on what Jesus is teaching.

Be still. Let your inner chatter fall silent.

Listen.

His words are deeply familiar,

yet they're like nothing you've ever heard before.

As you listen,

perhaps you feel a tender Mercy enfolding you,

or a holy Restlessness stirring in your heart.

Perhaps a radiant Light glimmers at the edges of your sight,

or a velvet Darkness deepens around you.

Perhaps a yearning for Justice wells up in you,

or a desire for Healing,

or a longing for Wisdom.

You continue to listen as Jesus teaches.

Jesus falls silent. Then something occurs to him.

He turns to Peter and says, "Put out into the deep water."

Peter rows out into the deep part of the lake.

He and Jesus are farther away now, but you can still see them.

You watch as Peter lets down the fishing nets.

And movement explodes into the nets:

countless fish wriggling and leaping and splashing,  
their scales shimmering in the sunlight.

The nets are full!

Another boat comes over to help haul in the nets.

But there is so much life,  
wriggling and leaping and splashing,  
the boats are overloaded and start to sink.

Containment is not the answer.

This irrepressible life must be released.

As water pours into the foundering boats, the fish are freed.

They leap over the sides, scales flashing in the sun  
as they launch themselves back into the lake  
and swim for the depths.

Life in abundance, exuberant, beyond imagining!

As the fish leap toward freedom, toward their own joyous futures,  
the boats are lightened,  
and water no longer pours in.

Jesus watches, smiling, as the fish swim away,  
countless minnows and tilapia and carp,  
their bodies iridescent and strong,  
silvery flashes darting in all directions.

Still smiling, Jesus looks at Peter.

Then, turning toward the shore,

he looks at you and says,

“Do not be afraid.”

“Do not be afraid.”

\* \* \* **KEEP SILENCE**, for 3 minutes or as long as you wish \* \* \*

As you return from your practice of holy silence,

bring with you

this story from our tradition.

Carry the story with you

in times of joy and times of grief,

through the warm sunlight of summer

and the gentle hush of falling snow.

Abundance is all around you.

Do not be afraid.

Just look to the One who is Life itself.

Look to the Savior who teaches you

and loves you more than words can say.

Amen.

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**lake:** Lake Kinneret (Gennesaret) is another term for the Sea of Galilee

**hear the word of God:** Luke 5:1

**tender Mercy:** Luke 1:50, 54, 72, 78

**radiant Light:** Luke 2:9, 32; John 8:12

**darkness:** The German Dominican mystics Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260–1328) and Johannes Tauler (ca. 1300–1361) taught and preached about darkness in the Christian contemplative life. Here is Tauler on the search for God in contemplative prayer: “Whoever arrives here has discovered what [they have] been searching for far and wide. [Their] spirit will be led into a hidden desert far beyond [their] natural faculties. Words cannot describe it, for it is the unfathomable darkness where the divine Goodness reigns above all.... This ‘darkness’ is to be understood in such a way: It is a light inaccessible to created reason, far beyond its comprehension. It is a wilderness because no natural path leads to it. In this wilderness the spirit is raised above itself, above all its powers of comprehension and understanding, and the soul now drinks from the very spring, from the true and essential source.” See Sermon 11 in *Johannes Tauler: Sermons*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Maria Shradly (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985), 59. See also Eckhart’s commentary on Exodus, paragraphs 235–238 in *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. Bernard McGinn (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986), 117–118.

**yearning for Justice:** Luke 4:18

**desire for Healing:** Luke 4:33–41; 5:12–14; and throughout the Gospels

**life in abundance:** John 10:10

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